

**APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL
(SUFFOLK LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION) ORDER**

APPENDIX 1 TO

PROOF OF EVIDENCE:

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ANGLIA LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION STRATEGY S23: HIGHAM, SUFFOLK

STAGE 1 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT



January 2018

Report Status: **FINAL**



1.0 DOCUMENT INFORMATION

- 1.1 Document No: 1459/0001-RSA-04
- Issue No: 02: Augmented brief
 - Date: 9th January 2018
 - Prepared by: A. Haunton
 - Checked by: J. Thompson
 - Approved by: A. Haunton

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Commission and Terms of Reference

- 2.1.1 This report results from a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit carried out on Network Rail's proposal to close level crossing S23: Higham on the Ipswich to Cambridge line and extinguish the linking footpath. The audit was carried out at the request of Suffolk Highways' Graham Taylor.
- 2.1.2 The Audit Team membership was as follows:
- | | |
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| Andy Haunton
(Audit Team Leader) | BEng (Hons), MCIHT, FSoRSA
Capital Traffic |
| Jonathan Thompson
(Audit Team Member) | IEng, FIHE, MSoRSA
Capital Traffic |
- 2.1.3 For the purposes of compliance with Highways England's HD 19/15 it is recorded that both the Audit Team Leader and Team Member hold a Certificate of Competency in Road Safety Audit.
- 2.1.4 The Audit was undertaken by Capital Traffic in accordance with the Audit Brief confirmed by Graham Taylor on 7th December 2017. It took place during mid December 2017 / early January 2018 and comprised an examination of the documents provided as listed in Appendix A, plus a visit to the site of the proposed scheme. The Audit Brief was augmented by Suffolk County Council's Andrew Woodin on 8th January 2018, when details of footpath diversionary routes were described in outline to the Audit Team prior to the commencement of a second site visit.
- 2.1.5 The Audit Team visited the site of the proposed scheme during the hours of 13:30 to 14:00 on 11th December 2017. The weather during the site visit was heavily overcast with moderate rain/sleet and the existing highway surfaces were wet with laying snow on some untrafficked surfaces. Traffic flows were very low on Higham Road, moderate but of high speed on the A14 westbound entry slip and high on the A14 mainline. A second site visit was undertaken on 8th January 2018 when the weather was again heavily overcast although fine and the existing paved highway surfaces were dry. The state of unpaved areas varied but all necessary areas were readily accessible on foot. Traffic flows were consistent with those viewed during the first site visit, plus flows on Coalpit Lane were seen to be moderate but tending towards higher speed.

- 2.1.6 The terms of reference of this audit are as described in Highways England's document HD 19/15 Road Safety Audit. The procedure has been followed as far as is practicable given that the audit has not been commissioned by or carried out directly for Highways England. The team has examined and reported only on the road safety implications of the scheme as presented and has not examined or verified the compliance of the designs to any other criteria. However, to clearly explain a safety problem or the recommendation to resolve a problem the Audit Team may, on occasion, have referred to a design standard without touching on technical audit.
- 2.1.7 Unless general to the scheme, all comments and recommendations are referenced to the design drawings and the locations have been indicated on the plan located in Appendix B.

2.2 Description of the Scheme

- 2.2.1 Network Rail is carrying out feasibility studies to explore options for the closure of level crossings throughout Suffolk, as part of their on-going commitment to deliver a safer, more efficient and reliable railway.
- 2.2.2 It is proposed to close level crossing S23 at Higham on the Ipswich to Cambridge line. The footpath running from Higham Road to the A14 via the crossing will be extinguished. An alternative route is proposed along Higham Road, the two-way section of the A14 slip road and across the A14 Junction 40 bridge. A second diversion is also proposed, linking to the proposed S24 Higham Ground Frame crossing closure footpath diversion. For the purposes of this audit the diversion is considered as far as Coalpit Lane to the east.

3.0 ITEMS RAISED IN PREVIOUS ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

- 3.1 The Audit Team is aware that Mott Macdonald carried out a stage 1 safety audit during 2016. This audit, however, is an independent parallel exercise. Hence, the findings of the Mott Macdonald audit will not be reviewed as part of this audit.

4.0 ITEMS RAISED IN THIS STAGE 1 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

4.1 NON-MOTORISED USERS

4.1.1 PROBLEM

Location: A – Higham Road.

Summary: Risk to diverted walkers of being struck by passing vehicular traffic.

Following extinguishment of the footpath walkers will be diverted from the southern extinguishment point along Higham Road towards the A14. The section of Higham Road in question has a 60mph speed limit (national limit). There are no footways along Higham Road, plus some steep/high/narrow verges and restrictions in forward visibility due to the horizontal alignment (bend at the war memorial – see photo below) and vertical alignment (over the railway bridge). Walkers diverted by the closure of crossing S23 may, therefore, be exposed to passing vehicular traffic on Higham Road as they will sometimes need to walk in the carriageway. This may increase their risk of being struck by passing vehicular traffic, with poor visibility or dark conditions exacerbating the problem.



RECOMMENDATION

Pedestrian facilities along Higham Road should be improved (e.g. reprofiled verges, vegetation cut back), or an alternative footpath diversion route off the carriageway developed.

4.1.2 PROBLEM

Location: B – Coalpit Lane.

Summary: Risk to diverted walkers of being struck crossing Coalpit Lane due to constrained visibility.

The S23-S24 footpath diversion route will require walkers to cross Coalpit Lane, a 60mph (national speed limit) route. At the location of the proposed crossing the horizontal carriageway alignment may constrain intervisibility at the western crossing point between northbound drivers and eastbound walkers wishing to cross. This may increase the risk of walkers being struck when crossing the carriageway, especially in poor visibility conditions.



RECOMMENDATION

Ensure that visibility as per LTN 2/95 Table 1 is available where the footpath crosses Coalpit Lane.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330214/ltm-2-95_pedestrian-crossings.pdf

4.1.3 PROBLEM

Location: C – A14.

Summary: Remnants of an extinguished footpath may increase the risk of walkers being struck crossing the A14 or on the A14 slip road.

The proposal to close level crossing S23 will see the footpath running from Higham Road to the A14 via the level crossing being extinguished, with an alternative route being proposed along Higham Road and the two-way section of the A14 westbound on-slip. In fact, the crossing has already been closed and northern section of footpath ploughed up.



The Audit Team understands that a footpath has already been extinguished to the immediate north of the length of footpath that is now proposed for extinguishment. There are, however, still clear remnants of the extinguished footpath on the A14 in the form of a gap in the barrier on the central reserve and stile with footpath plate on the northern highway boundary. This gives rise to concern that walkers may still approach the level crossing from the north as the extinguished footpath appears to remain. In doing so they will cross the A14, where the risk of being struck by fast moving traffic appears high. Then, finding the footpath south of the A14 extinguished, have to walk along the A14 slip road. Although traffic flows along the slip road are moderate, vehicles are



moving at high speed, particularly towards the western end. Walkers using the A14 slip road may be at increased risk of being struck by high speed traffic, especially in poor visibility or dark conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Fully remove the remnants of the extinguished footpath (stile, sign and central reserve gap) from the northern side of the A14 and ensure that an appropriate route is implemented from north to south across A14 Junction 40.

4.1.4 PROBLEM

Location: D – A14 Westbound on-slip junction with Coalpit Lane.

Summary: Risk to diverted walkers of being struck crossing the slip road at the junction.

The diverted footpath route will run along a new footway on the southern side of the two-way section of the A14 westbound on-slip and cross to the northern side of the A14 via the Junction 40 bridge (i.e. along Coalpit Lane), crossing the slip road at the Coalpit Lane junction. The junction of the A14 westbound on-slip with Coalpit Lane has a collision record showing 4 slight injury collisions over the most recent 10-year period (source: Crashmap), plus a record of collisions including one serious injury over the 19-year period available to view. Hence, there is concern that walkers crossing at this location may be at increased risk of being involved, either directly or indirectly, in collisions with motorised traffic when crossing or waiting to cross.

RECOMMENDATION

A collision / conflict study should be carried to understand how and why the collisions are occurring at this junction. The study should inform the design of an appropriate crossing facility for the diverted footpath.

End of list of Problems identified and Recommendations offered in this Stage 1 Audit
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5.0 AUDIT STATEMENT

5.1 We certify that this Road Safety Audit has been carried out in accordance with HD 19/15.

5.2 Audit Team Leader

Andy Haunton
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Director
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Signed:



Date:

09/01/2018

5.3 Audit Team Member

Jonathan Thompson
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Signed:



Date:

09/01/2018

APPENDIX A

Documents forming the Audit Brief

DRAWINGS

- MMD-354763-S23-GEN-001 Rev P2 S23 - Higham, Suffolk, Higham CP
- MMD-367516-S23-GEN-005 Rev P3A S23-Higham, Suffolk -Higham CP, PostCode IP286NJ

DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDIX B

Problem Location Plan

